History of the Shwegyin Karen Mission

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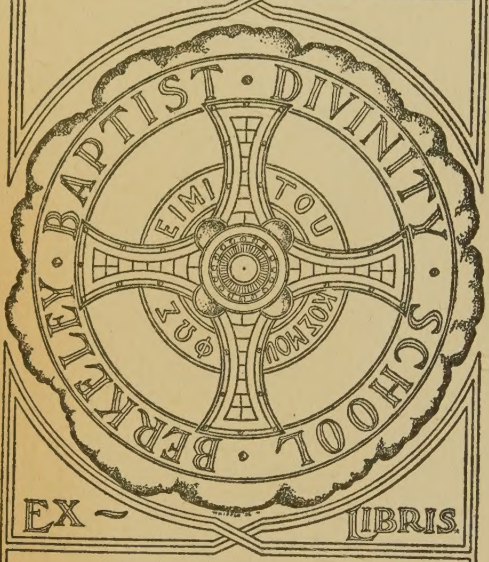

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HISTORY OF THE SHWEGYIN KAREN MISSION

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History of the Shwegyin Karen Mission

THE KAREN PEOPLE.

One of the most interesting races of the world, religiously considered, is that of the Karens of Burma, southeastern Asia. Tucked away in an obscure corner of the earth, they were nevertheless **marvellously kept of God through many generations for the reception of the gospel;** and not only so, but as inscriptions on rocks and on brick tablets were in the providence of God hidden away for thousands of years to be unearthed in these recent days for the confirmation of the Scripture, so it would seem these people were hidden away from the observation of men to be brought forth within comparatively recent times as a **blessed confirmation of the faith of God's children.**

Whence the Karens came, it is impossible to say with certainty, but it is inferred from their traditions that they must have left the early cradle of the human race many centuries ago, and, following along the northern slopes of the Himalaya Mountains, or crossing the plains of Thibet, have reached their present habitat by way of western China. These traditions are very vague, but they tell of passing over "rivers of sand," which may refer to the desert of Gobi. Certain it is that at the present time, or more especially at the time when they were first brought to the knowledge of the missionaries, they occupied for the most part the lower ranges in Burma and Siam of those spurs or off-shoots of the Himalayas which find their ultimate termini in the partly submerged mountain islands of the Malayan Archipelago. The Muhsoes, Kwes, Kaws and Lahus are closely allied races which extend up into the mountainous regions of western China. These peoples have a curious tradition to the effect that when they were on their migrations from the northern country there were ninety-nine families or tribes in all, but that they stopped to make their dinner of snails, which it is said can never be cooked soft. Thirty-three families, including the Karens, boiled their snails for a time, and finding that they were not soft, ate them as they were and hurried on, while the sixty-six other families waiting to cook their snails soft were left behind to this day.

That which particularly distinguishes the Karens and gives them their peculiar interest is their possession of **traditions** regarding the creation and fall which very closely resemble the account given in the

12810

Scripture. A translation of the prose form of these traditions as it was reduced to writing and published in the Karen language soon after the Karens were brought to the knowledge of civilized people, follows:

KAREN TRADITION OF THE CREATION AND FALL.

"God created heaven and earth."

"Having created heaven and earth, He created the sun, He created the moon, He created the stars."

"Having created the sun, the moon and the stars, He created man. And of what did He create man? He created man from the earth."

"Having created man, He created woman. How did He create woman? He took a rib out of the man, and created a woman."

"Having created woman, He created life. How did He create life? Father God said, 'I love my son and daughter; I will give them my great life.' He took a little piece of His life, breathed into the nostrils of the two persons, and they came to life, and were real human beings."

"Having created man, He created food and drink. He created rice, He created water, He created fire, He created cows, He created elephants, He created birds."

"Having created animals, Father God said, 'My son and daughter, your father will make and give you a garden. In the garden are seven different kinds of trees, bearing seven different kinds of fruit. Among the seven one tree is not good to eat. Eat not of its fruit. If you eat, you will become old, you will die. Eat it not. All I have created I give to you. Eat and drink to the full. Once in seven days I will visit you. All I have commanded you observe and do. Forget me not. Pray to me every morning and night.'"

"Afterwards Satan came and said, 'Why are you here?' 'Our Father God put us here,' they said. 'What do you eat here,' Satan inquired. 'Our Father God created food and drink for us; food without end.' Satan said, 'Show me your food.' And they went with Satan following behind them, to show him. On arriving at the garden, they showed him the fruits, saying, 'This is sweet, this is sour, this is bitter, this is astringent, this is savory, this is fiery; but this tree, we know not whether it be sour or sweet. Our Father God said to us, "Eat not the fruit of this tree; if you eat it, you will die." We eat it not, and do not know whether it be sour or sweet.' 'Not so, my children,' Satan replied, 'The heart of your Father God is not with you. This is the richest and sweetest. It is richer than the

others, sweeter than the others, and not merely richer and sweeter, but if you eat it you will possess miraculous powers. You will be able to ascend into heaven, and descend into the earth. You will be able to fly. The heart of your God is not with you. This desirable thing He has not given you. My heart is not like the heart of your God. He is not honest. He is envious. I am honest. I am not envious. I love you and tell you the whole. Your Father God does not love you. He did not tell you the whole. However, if you do not believe me, do not eat it. But if each one will taste a single fruit, then you will know.' The man replied, 'Our Father God said to us, "Eat not the fruit of this tree,' and we will not eat it.' Thus saying, he rose up and went away."

"But the woman listened to Satan, and being rather pleased with what he said, remained. After Satan had continued coaxing her for a long time, she wavered and asked him, 'If we eat, shall we indeed be able to fly?' 'My daughter,' Satan replied, 'I seek to persuade you because I love you.' The woman took one of the fruits and ate. And Satan laughing said, 'My daughter listens to me very well. Now go, give the fruit to your husband, and say to him, "I have eaten the fruit. It is exceedingly rich." If he does not eat, deceive him, that he may eat. Otherwise, if you die, you will die alone, or, if you become deified, you will be deified alone.' The woman doing as Satan told her, went and coaxed her husband, till she won him over to her own mind, and he took the fruit from the hand of his wife and ate. When he had eaten, she went to Satan and said, 'My husband has eaten the fruit.' On hearing that he laughed exceedingly and said, 'Now you have listened to me very well indeed, my son and daughter.' "

"On the morning of the day after they had eaten, God visited them. But they did not follow Him singing praises, as they had been wont to do. He approached them and said, 'Why have you eaten the fruit of the tree I commanded you not to eat?' They did not dare to reply. And God cursed them. 'Now you have not observed what I commanded you,' He said; 'The fruit that is not good to eat, I told you not to eat, but you have not listened and have eaten. Therefore you shall become old, you shall get sick, and you shall die.' "

How did the Karens come by such traditions? No one can say. It is of course possible that they derived them from the **Nestorian Christians** at the same time that the gospel was carried by them into China. But a serious objection to this theory is that the Karens have no knowledge whatever of Christ. A favorite view entertained by many of the early missionaries was that the Karens belonged to the

lost tribes of Israel. This opinion seems to be not so commonly entertained at the present day, and yet there is much to favor it. The Karen name for God, Y'wah, is very like Yahweh which scholars suppose to have been the ancient Hebrew pronunciation of Jehovah. The Karen language has several sounds which were common to the Semitic languages, but do not appear to be in use except in a limited degree among the other races of eastern and southeastern Asia. The Karens know nothing of circumcision, but they have certain customs which remind one of certain of the Mosaic institutions, notably the passover. On the other hand, though some of the early missionaries thought they could discern a Jewish caste in the Karen physiognomy, their physical features seem distinctly Mongolian, and their language, although it possesses the Semitic sounds mentioned above, is yet of the Mongolian tonal order.

A very **singular circumstance** in connection with the Karen traditions is that they seem to contain no distinct and clear reference to the flood, accounts of which are so common among most primitive races of the earth. On account of this peculiarity of Karen tradition the theory has sometimes been broached that the Karens may have forsaken the cradle of the human race even **before the flood.** This position would perhaps be tenable if, as some affirm, the Scriptures do not assert the entire universality of the flood, but only that it was coextensive with the then known world.

But whatever view may be entertained of the origin of the Karen traditions of the creation and fall, they certainly seem to have been derived originally from the same source as the account given in the Scripture, if not from the Scripture itself, and they are no doubt of great antiquity. Their preservation in so great purity, by mere word of mouth—for the Karens had no literature when the missionaries found them—is certainly most extraordinary, and if future investigation should ever prove their pre-Christian origin, they would afford a most interesting and unexpected confirmation of the word of Scripture.

What makes these traditions especially valuable and interesting in view of the present theme, however, is **the knowledge of the true God** which they have kept alive among the people. It will be perceived at once what an immense advantage is given to the missionary in preaching to these Karens. Let him go among the Burmans or any other of the races of eastern and southeastern Asia and he will have no little difficulty in selecting from their vocabulary a word which will adequately convey to them the idea of God. But let him go among these Karens and use their word K'sah Y'wah, and at once they understand

the very same God whom he worships, the God who created the heavens and the earth, the God who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.

But let it not be supposed that the Karens, having this knowledge of God, had no **need of the gospel.** Although they knew of God, they did not worship Him. The tradition translated above goes on to state that after the fall one of the children of that first pair was taken ill, and the parents said to themselves, "What shall we do? God has forsaken us. We must betake ourselves to Satan again." So they went to Satan, and asked him what they should do. "Well," he said, "you must get a pig." So they got a pig, and Satan taught them certain ceremonies that they must go through with. And they went through with these ceremonies, and surely enough the child recovered. But after a few days another child was taken ill, and so they went to Satan again, and asked him what they should do. "Well," said he, "did you get a pig and go through with the ceremonies I taught you?" "Oh, yes," they said, "we have done all that and still our child is not getting any better, but is rather growing worse." "Well, then," said Satan, "you must get a fowl." So they caught a fowl, and Satan taught them how to proceed in order to divine the omens from the bones of the fowl. And they did just as Satan told them to do, but instead of getting better their child continued to grow worse and finally died. So they went to Satan again, and said, "Here, what do you mean? Our child was taken ill, and we got a pig, and went through with the ceremonies you taught us, and when that did not suffice, we got a fowl, and did just as you told us to do; but instead of getting any better our child continued to grow worse. In fact it died." "Oh, well," said Satan, "whenever anyone of you is taken ill, you must get a pig and go through with the ceremonies I taught you, and if that does not suffice, you must get a fowl, and do just as I told you to do, and ——" here Satan used a play upon words which made it possible to understand his meaning in either one of two ways; that if the omens proved favorable, the person would live, and if unfavorable the person would die, or, what was an absolutely true, but also an utterly heartless thing to say, that "if he is to live, he will live, and if he is to die, he will die." And, by a strange perversity of human nature, yet not more strange than is to be seen every day among more favored peoples, the Karens keep up these practices which were taught them by Satan, to this day.

But not only were the Karens marvellously kept of God through many generations for the reception of the gospel, but they were also

marvellously prepared of God for the reception of the gospel. For not only did they have these traditions of the creation and fall handed down to them by word of mouth through many generations, but **prophets** arose among them from time to time. And so remarkable were the messages which these prophets brought to their people that it seems not irreverent to suppose that they may have been truly inspired of God. For even in the Old Testament times those who were God's spokesmen and truly represented Him to the world were not confined to Abraham and his descendants, but outside this chosen people there were those, like Melchisedek and Jethro, who were truly moved of the divine spirit. And as these prophets arose from time to time they sought to encourage their people—for it should be borne in mind that the Karens were an exceedingly oppressed and down-trodden race—and they said, "Children and grandchildren, God will yet save the Karen nation. He will yet bring deliverance to the Karen people." And then some of them went on to say how this deliverance was to come. "Our younger brother, the white foreigner, will come to us from beyond the setting sun, and will bring us a golden book, which will teach us the way to happiness and heaven." And some of them went on to describe the appearance of the white foreigner—and that before they had ever seen a white man—and they said, "Our younger brother, the white foreigner, when he comes to us, will be clothed in garments of shining black and shining white." And when it is remembered that the Karens never wear black in their garments and that although they do wear white it could never by any possibility be described as being a shining white, but is always a very dingy white, the appropriateness of the language becomes evident. And some of them went on to say that this younger brother, the white foreigner, would come wearing a hat like a snail's shell, and to this day the Karen will occasionally call the attention of the missionary to the shape of the hats which are worn by white people in that country, made of pith and cork, exceedingly light and affording an admirable protection against the sun, and with their inverted-chopping-bowl appearance bearing indeed a certain resemblance to a snail's shell.

And thus it came about that when the missionaries found these people, they found them a people standing **on the tip-toe of expectation,** as it were, watching eagerly for their coming.

BEGINNINGS AT SHWEGYIN.

Straight across the northern part of Asia stretch the vast plains of Siberia. Across the central portion rise the lofty ranges of the

Himalaya Mountains. In the south central portion jutting into the Indian Ocean lies the peninsula of Hindustan. To the east of the Peninsula of Hindustan lies the Bay of Bengal, and to the east of that again lies **Burma,** a country about as large as the New England states with the addition of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland, having a population of about 12,000,000. It would perhaps be difficult to find anywhere on the face of the earth a more **polyglot** people than are the inhabitants of this country, for the Government census recognizes no fewer than sixty-six races, each having its own peculiar language or dialect. Chief among these races in point of numerical importance are the **Burmans** themselves, next the **Talaings,** and after them the **Shans.** The **Karens** come fourth, numbering with their various tribes about 750,000 in Burma. How many there are altogether it is impossible to say even approximately, but if the Karens of Burma and of Northern Siam, and the allied races in both of these countries and in China be included, the aggregate would certainly amount to several millions.

Southern Burma, in which the missions to the Karens are located, is divided by three parallel ranges of mountains running north and south. Between the first and second of these, counting from the west, flows the Irrawaddy River, and between the second and third the Sittang River. To the east of the third range runs the Salween River, which along part of its course forms the boundary between Burma and Siam. On the Sittang River about seventy-five miles from its mouth at a point where a little mountain stream joins it on the east lies the town of **Shwegyin** (pronounced Shway-jin´). It contains five or six thousand inhabitants, mostly Burmans. The most conspicuous buildings are idol temples, monasteries, and pagodas—for the Burmans are Buddhists. The houses of the natives are for the most part very simple structures made chiefly of bamboo and covered with thatch. A few comfortable buildings are occupied by the Government officers, English and native. The scenery about the town is varied and pleasing. Indeed, it is one of the beauty spots of Burma. On the west the plain stretches far away into the distance, while on the east rises a semi-circle of high and broken mountain ranges. The country in distinction from the town is commonly called the **jungle,** and here it is that the Karens for the most part live, in scattered villages, gaining their livelihood by the cultivation of the soil. The nearest mission stations are Toungoo, about seventy-five miles to the north, and Rangoon, about one hundred miles to the southwest. Previous to the last half of the nineteenth century Shwegyin and Toungoo, with all the

country lying north in what was known as Burma Proper, was in a state of deep moral and spiritual darkness. Scarcely a ray of gospel light had penetrated that region. No knee had bowed except in homage to false gods, and the people were held in the terrors of gross superstition. But the time had come for deliverance. For after the Anglo-Burmese war of 1852 Shwegyin and Toungoo were included in the territory ceded to the English, and the country was then opened to the "feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace."

In 1853 **Rev. Norman Harris** was appointed by the American Baptist Missionary Union to open a new mission station at Shwegyin. He had already labored seven years among the Karens of Maulmein, had acquired their language, and from his knowledge of native character and experience in the work, was prepared to enter upon his duties in this new field with high hopes of success. As he was the first and, for over thirty years, almost the only laborer in this mission, it is proper to give here some **account of his early life,** in order that the character and moulding of a mind destined in the future to so great and interesting a work may be the better understood.

Mr. Harris was born in Becket, Berkshire County, Mass., February 19, 1813. His father was a farmer of moderate means. Neither of his parents was a professor of religion, and they seldom went to church. At the age of seventeen his attention was directed to the subject of his soul's salvation. A neighbor's child, when lying at the point of death, put to him the searching question, "Norman, do you love my Jesus?" It was an arrow of conviction that pierced to his inmost soul, and in view of his helplessness and sin he cast himself on the mercy of the all-atoning Saviour. He then made a **consecration of his whole life and being to the work of saving others.** He became exceedingly anxious for the conversion of his father's family, and often made efforts, which were at first fruitless, to erect a family altar. For a long time he was obliged to make the barn his bower of prayer, and during the cold winter months he used daily to resort thither. This finally touched the heart of his father, and he was allowed to offer up prayer to God by the fireside and with the family. His desire was in time gratified by seeing his brothers and sisters, seven in number, brought to Christ, and before the death of his father and mother he had reason to believe that they too were cherishing a hope of eternal life. Although exceedingly diffident, his anxiety for the salvation of his friends and neighbors also was so great that he conducted stated evening services in the neighborhood, which was remote from any other place of worship. It was with a faltering tongue that he spoke,

REV. NORMAN HARRIS

for Mr. Harris was never an eloquent man in the ordinary acceptance of the term; and often men of longer experience and readier powers of expression had to help out his imperfect utterance with their testimonies—it is said that frequently when the hesitating boy could think of nothing to say, Deacon Joseph Wadsworth, who later became his father-in-law, would take up the thought and carry it on—but the blessing of the Lord attended these humble efforts, and he saw many respond to his earnest invitation to come to Jesus.

From the very first Mr. Harris had a burning desire to **tell the heathen** of a Saviour's love, and some time after his conversion he listened to an address on the subject of missions which stirred his very soul. The condition of the heathen without a knowledge of the eternal God was set forth in a clear and pointed manner. On the way home, he knelt down in a secluded place behind a stone wall, and made a new consecration of himself, his life, his all, if it should be the Master's will, to the work of telling the heathen the story of redeeming love. He longed to be among them, and supposed that, once there, he could tell them in his own language the things that were nearest and dearest to his heart. The language of Canaan was so delightful to him, he thought all the world must certainly understand it.

Not long after this, he went to the pastor of the Baptist church, and made known his wish to unite with the children of God, and his burning desire to carry the gospel to the heathen. This godly man, Rev. John Wilder, gave him salutary advice, showed him the **necessity of acquiring an education** should he become a missionary, and told him moreover, to his great surprise, that he would need to learn the language of the people among whom he labored. He also lent him for his instruction the life of Mrs. Ann H. Judson. This book he took home, deposited it safely in the barn so that his parents might not see it, and there he carefully and prayerfully perused its contents during his leisure moments. His desire to go to the heathen grew more and more intense, and no sacrifice seemed too great, that he might accomplish this object.

His parents were unalterably opposed to any such step, and steadfastly refused to do anything to assist him in this great undertaking. His father demanded his services and all his earnings until he was twenty-one years of age. After that he labored faithfully in whatever his hands could find to do that he might secure the means to acquire an education. And in the fall of 1836 he went to **Madison (now Colgate) University,** at Hamilton, N. Y., a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles from his home.

Most of this distance he traversed on foot so that he might save the means so carefully laid aside for other more necessary expenses. During his course of study, which lasted eight years, he labored morning and evening to defray the cost of his board, and rang the school bell to pay for his tuition. As chapel exercises were then held at five o'clock in the morning, and he never failed of being punctual, it was a common remark among his fellow students that he must have slept with his foot in the bell rope. He received no help from any educational society or from any other source. Indeed, his independence was so great that he would probably have spurned any offer in that direction. By strict economy and faithful labor he graduated from his whole course of study free from debt and in possession of a good library. On the evening of the same day he was married to Miss Olive Celina Wadsworth, who was also from Becket, Mass.

In October, 1844, Mr. Harris was **appointed a missionary** to the Karens of Burma, but scarcity of funds detained him in this country until July, 1846. He then joyfully set sail with his wife and young child for his long anticipated field of labor among the heathen. In the same ship was Dr. Judson, who with his wife was returning to Burma after his first and only furlough in this country. After a voyage of about five months, the little party arrived at Amherst, whence Mr. and Mrs. Harris proceeded to Maulmein, where they labored successfully for seven years.

It was in August, 1853, that Mr. and Mrs. Harris with their four children left Maulmein in a small Burmese boat on their **perilous and almost unexplored voyage to Shwegyiń**, their future field of labor. The journey lasted three weary weeks, and the close confinement in the little boat, with the necessity of using the impure water of the river, told sadly on the health of the lone voyagers, especially that of Mrs. Harris. It was late one Saturday evening when the keel of the boat touched the shore at the foot of the idolatrous town which was to be their future home. No kind friend stood on the bank of the river to give them a hearty welcome. They must remain in the uncomfortable boat over the Sabbath and until they could find shelter from the rain and tropical sun. So far as they knew, the name of God had never been spoken in all this region, and no words of praise or prayer had ever ascended to His high and holy altar. A few Christian Karens had come with them from Maulmein to assist them in their labors of love for this people. The next morning, being the Lord's Day, the little party went on shore, and under an old deserted roof worshipped the one eternal God. The missionary used as his text those wonderful

words: "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And He who said, "Before they call, I will answer," was verifying His promise, for **a heathen Karen walking on the bank of the river on his way to town, was attracted** by the strange sight and sound. He placed himself in a position to hear without being observed. He had never seen a white face before, and had never heard a foreigner speak in his own peculiar language, but he was well acquainted with the tradition of his ancestors and the expectation that their younger brother, the white foreigner, would come from beyond the setting sun and bring to them the golden book. He had become tired of waiting for this book, was dissatisfied with the religion of his own people which had no object of worship, and had adopted that of the Buddhists. He had been a faithful worshipper at the shrine of Guatama, going early in the morning long before the other worshippers, but nothing had yet satisfied in any way the longing of his soul. In the missionary he recognized his younger brother, and in the Bible the long expected treasure which should guide them back to happiness and heaven. He heard the truth, believed it at once, found it just what his soul needed, and accepted it without any questionings. When the exercises were over, he stole away unobserved, and went home to tell his family and friends the wonderful things he had heard.

After the Sabbath Mr. Harris found an old zayat or rest-house which had long been deserted, obtained permission from the government to occupy it, and repaired it for a temporary home. In a few days the Karen who had heard the gospel on the previous Sabbath, **Sau Tah-ree** by name, sought out the abode of the missionary, told him how he had heard the truth from his lips, and expressed his desire to hear more. In a short time he came again, bringing with him his wife and her parents. They with others heard the truth, and gladly accepted it, and after the expiration of seven weeks eight joyful converts, **seven Karens and one Shan who was the first fruits of his tribe, put on Christ by an open confession.** The waters which before had reflected nothing but the idolatrous rites of a deluded people, were now stirred for the first time by the sacred rite of baptism. On the evening of the same day, November 13th, 1853, the first church at Shwegyin was organized, and the little band of disciples came around the table of their Lord to commemorate His dying love.

The day had dawned brightly and full of promise. Yet, as is the case with so much of the work on the foreign field, dark, portentous **clouds mingled strangely with the brightness.** On the evening of the day when the first church of Shwegyin was organized, after the Lord's

Supper had been observed, Mrs. Harris, who on the way up from Maulmein had contracted one of the diseases common to the country but had somewhat recovered, suffered a relapse. It soon became evident that her end was fast approaching. It is said of her that in her younger days she had so great a horror of death that when her own mother died she dared not go into the room where the body lay, but went out and peered in through the window. But when the time of her own departure drew near, knowing how hard it would be for her husband to perform the last sad rites there hundreds of miles from any other white woman's face, she set about attiring herself for her last resting place. She indicated the dress that she wished to wear, helped to put it on, assisted in arranging her hair, kissed the four children she was about to leave behind, spoke a parting message to the husband and father, and when all was over she said, "It is not often that a mother is called upon to array herself for the grave, but I have done it with as much composure as though I were going out to make a call." In her last hours she seemed to see as in a vision a great company coming up from that dark land, all clothed in white and with palms of victory in their hands, and when the moment of dissolution arrived, with the words "Praise the Lord" upon her lips, she passed away, while a smile of ecstatic joy hovered over her face, like a ray of reflected glory from above, so that the youngest child said to her father, "What makes mamma laugh?" God be praised for the victory which He gives to His children, even in the most adverse circumstances, over the last great enemy.

It was on the 23rd of November, 1853, that the light of this home went out forever. The little family must now be disbanded, and the motherless children taken to America. Preparations were at once made to leave for Rangoon. Arriving there, it was thought best that Miss Miranda Vinton, who had been much in Mr. Harris's family while they were in Maulmein, should accompany the children home, while the father should return to his promising field of labor. Accordingly on the 23rd of January, 1854, Mr. Harris took his four little ones to the ship Collingwood, which was to bear them far away from his sight. In alluding to it in after years he used to say that this was **the most trying event of his life.** Committing the precious charges to the loving care of Him who said, "When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up," he soon retraced his footsteps to the desolate home in Shwegyin.

But the missionary was not left without consolation for he soon found that those whom God had so lately given him in this dark place

were ready to gather around him with words of **sympathy and cheer.** Sau Tah-ree, the first convert, removed with his family to the mission compound so he might be near the missionary and prepare himself for future usefulness. He commenced at once to learn to read, and as soon as he understood a truth of the gospel, he was ready to impart it to his fellow-countrymen. He became in time an efficient co-laborer with the missionary, preaching the Word with great originality and power, and remained so until the time of his death about fifteen years after. At the time when he and his wife became Christians, they had one son named Pah-kau-too. Three other sons were afterwards born to them to whom they gave the scriptural names of Samuel, Isaiah, and John. All of these in time became worthy of their names. Sau Tah-ree's wife and parents, having heard the gospel for the first time from his lips, soon united with the people of God, and became earnest exemplars of the new religion. The wife was an active woman of unusual intelligence. Her parents were remarkable for their decision of character, and wielded an excellent influence over their neighbors. Although he lived a long distance from the chapel, the father was seldom absent from the services on the Lord's Day, and often emphasized the words of the preacher by some timely remark. The mother was a leper, but was kindly cared for by her husband. She lived a helpless life for many years, but was spared to pray for the heathen. The last labor of love she was able to do with her decaying hands, was to make some thatch for the chapel. The two left this scene of care and suffering at about the same time with the dreaded cholera, which yearly takes away so many victims.

Mr. Harris entered with his whole soul into the work whereunto he felt that the Lord of the Harvest had called him. He made frequent trips into the jungles, where many were found ready to listen to the sweet story of the Savior's love and mercy, for it soon developed that **the heathen had in a wonderful manner been especially prepared** for the reception of the gospel.

About a year before this time the cholera had broken out in the upper part of the district, bringing distress and desolation wherever it appeared. One morning a Karen named **Sau Doo-moo** arose with his whole family in the enjoyment of health. The sun set on the lifeless remains of his wife and all his children save one helpless infant. Distracted with grief he left this child in the care of the Burmans, and went forth, not knowing or caring whither he went. Day after day found him so much farther from his native village. The Karens are a very hospitable people, and he never lacked for food or shelter.

The simple story of his grief touched the hearts of those who heard it, and called forth their sympathy. A Heavenly Father's hand, unseen by him, led him on week after week, and still his sorrow was not assuaged. He was at last found by Christian Karens near Tavoy, about three hundred miles from his home. When they became acquainted with his great affliction, they told him of a balm in Gilead and a Physician there. He listened and accepted the consolation which was presented to him in the gospel. He was taught the simple truth and learned to read the word of God for himself.

About the time that Mr. Harris went to Shwegyin, **Sau Doo-moo returned to his native village,** to tell to all what a dear Saviour he had found. The news of his arrival, and the stranger news that he had brought with him the long-expected book, flew like wild-fire through all the widespread jungles.

During the first six months of Mr. Harris' labor fifty-one Karens put on Christ by baptism, and professed before their heathen neighbors that they had left the superstitions of their forefathers and were worshippers of the eternal God. The Lord was indeed present to bless the lone missionary. Sau Doo-moo also proved himself to be a worthy laborer in the field. One year from the commencement of the mission, **five hundred and seventy-seven converts** had been baptized and **six churches** had been formed. Surely the prophetic vision of the dear departed one was reaching its fulfillment. Sau Doo-moo, who had been early ordained, baptized most of these persons. Mr. Harris seldom administered the rite of baptism by his own hands. He wished to give no occasion to any to say that they had built on other foundation than Christ Jesus.

On the 10th of January, 1854, the six churches met together at a village in a district a little to the north of Shwegyin named from its principal town Ler-do, meaning Great Stone, from the fact that a group of huge bowlders crowned the summit of a little hill near by. Here an association was organized which is still called the **Great Stone Association.** With what emotions of joy and gratitude must the missionary have looked upon the first great annual gathering of these people of God. From the very first the **spirit of evangelism** was strong among them, for we read that at this meeting four men were designated to carry the gospel to the regions beyond. As the Karens when converted have a great thirst for knowledge, arrangements were also made to open a **school** in town for the education of those who wished to prepare themselves for the gospel ministry and for the general instruction of the people in useful knowledge. The Karens themselves

provided the paddy or rice, and did all in their power to assist in the undertaking. Thus the work which was commenced in weakness, and was accompanied at first by severe trials, had been signally blessed by the Master and carried forward with **great success.**

YEARS OF TRAINING AND DISCIPLINE.

Promising as was the beginning of the Shwegyin Karen mission, the story of its later development is one of **comparatively slow outward progress.** With between six and seven hundred converts won before that first meeting of the association in 1854, the year 1865 saw only 732 names on the rolls of the churches, and in 1885, after twenty years more, there were but 1,104 members reported. Those early Christians, although rejoicing in a new found hope, were still **densely ignorant.** It is said that they knew only two things—first, that their long-expected book had been brought to them; and, second, that they need fear the evil spirits no more, for Jesus was stronger than the evil spirits. That was enough for salvation, and many no doubt died triumphantly in that simple faith, but it was not enough for the highest efficiency in the Christian life. For that long years of **training and discipline** were required. And training they surely had, but it was not only a training by their missionary, nor even a training of themselves in their personal experiences, but it was also, it would seem, a training **in the person of their missionary.** For it may be laid down as almost a law of the missionary life and work that in order that his people may grow and become strong the missionary must suffer. For as he suffers and shows forth the fruits of a quiet Christian faith his people imitate him and develop a similar faith.

The history of the Shwegyin Karen mission from the very beginning on almost to the present time has been from the human point of view one of **repeated disappointments and reverses.** In no other of our Karen missions has the missionary force, to which the native Christians naturally look for guidance and help, been at nearly all times so meager and suffered from so frequent depletions. Time and again has the field been left entirely alone for years in succession without a single missionary in charge. But the very fact of being left to themselves and being obliged to take up the responsibilities which the missionary has reluctantly laid down, has tended to develop on the part of the native Christians an **independence of character** and a **steadfastness of purpose** which perhaps could have been acquired in no other way. Not only so, but the Karen Christians of Shwegyin have a spirit of **Christian resignation** which it is believed is marked

Po Maung a very saint of God, a Karen Christian of the old type. He wears the distinctive Karen jacket and Burmese coat and skirt. His favorite head dress is a bath towel arranged in such a way as to show the fringed ends.

and unusual, and which seems attributable in no small degree to their witnessing the unassuming, but deep, unwavering faith of their missionary, Mr. Harris, in the midst of repeated and sore trials.

In the early part of the year 1856 Mr. Harris married **Miss Miranda Vinton,** a member of that family of Vintons which has made for itself so enviable a record in the annals of the Karen missions. She was a sister of Rev. Justus Vinton, and had already been in Burma five or six years when Mr. Harris went out with his first wife. Indeed, she introduced the newly arrived missionaries to the people, assisted them in acquiring the language, and did all in her power to make them useful and happy. She spent some time in their family during their stay of seven years in Maulmein, and when the four motherless children were to be sent to America it was she who consented to leave her work and take upon herself the care and responsibility incident to such an undertaking. She had already proven herself to be in every way a most efficient worker, and the missionary and the newly converted disciples at Shwegyin anticipated her coming with great pleasure. On the 16th of March she arrived at the home of her brother in Rangoon on her return from America. In a few days Mr. Harris met her, and they were united in the bonds of holy wedlock. The next day they started on an elephant, taking an overland trip to their home in Shwegyin. It was a bright day for the mission when they arrived at their destination. The people came in from all quarters and gave them a most hearty welcome. The school soon opened, and Mrs. Harris at once gained the sincere love and respect of all who came within her influence. She was in every way a worthy co-laborer with her indefatigable husband in a work exceedingly dear to both their hearts. She had an excellent command of the Karen language, was a good singer, and possessed unusual ability as a teacher. Never was Mrs. Harris more happy than in her work at this station. Bright indeed were those days of usefulness, and fraught with the hope that the years to come were just as full of such days of promise. But in the midst of this usefulness, when only five short months had passed away, Mrs. Harris, who for twelve years had been the personification of health, was laid prostrate by the jungle fever then so prevalent at this station, and in a few days she was no more. She was removed from her earthly labors to her heavenly home September 9, 1856.

This second shock was almost paralyzing in its effect on the newly formed churches. When the heathen are inclined to worship the eternal God, and affliction of any kind crosses their path, they consider it a bad omen, and say the evil spirits are against them. In such a

case they frequently return to their evil ways. So, when in the providence of God the family of the missionary himself was thus a second time stricken, many of the heathen refused to listen further to the preaching of the gospel.

Mr. Harris had now spent about eleven years in the country, and the severe labor required at this new station, together with the trying scenes through which he had passed, had undermined his constitution. He now became subject to repeated attacks of fever, until the physician recommended a change of climate as necessary to restore him to his wonted health. It was a serious matter indeed for him to leave the field at this critical time, but it seemed to be the only safe course to pursue. So with emotions of both sorrow and joy he **set sail for his native land.**

Sau Doo-moo was still at his post performing faithful duty. Sau Tah-ree, the first convert, who had proved himself a strong, efficient worker, was still on the mission compound and ready for the work assigned him. Other native laborers had been raised up, and the churches, which were self-supporting, were supplied with pastors. **Rev. George Watrous** and wife had been recently sent to labor among the Burmans of this station, and to them Mr. Harris entrusted the watch-care of the churches. They were soon transferred to the Karen mission, and entered with zeal upon the work. But the health of Mr. Watrous failing in a few months they were obliged to leave the station.

When the Karen Christians were again disappointed and left alone without foreign aid, they felt the necessity of looking to the Great Shepherd for help. Although some became disheartened, the greater part of them remained **steadfast and firm in the truth.** Most of the native pastors were very zealous, and felt the responsibility of souls upon their hearts. Mr. Vinton of Rangoon visited this station while Mr. Harris was absent, and wrote to him as follows: "I don't believe there is a prayer goes up to God from all these jungles, but the great burden is, 'O Lord, send back our beloved teacher,' and you must come at once that their prayers may be answered." Before two years had passed away they were by the grace of God permitted to look upon the face of him for whom they had so earnestly prayed.

During the absence of Mr. Harris in America he married **Mrs. J. E. Chapman,** a widowed sister of his first wife, and she, with her daughter, five years of age, accompanied him to Burma. After a sea voyage of more than five months they arrived in Rangoon on the 25th of December, 1858. As Mrs. Harris had received instruction from her husband on their passage out, she had so far acquired the

Karen language as to be able to read it intelligently on her arrival, and to commence very soon the duties devolving on her as a missionary. She had made great sacrifice in leaving two children behind her, and so no effort was too great that she might accomplish the object for which she had come. It was thought best, however, that she should remain in Rangoon until she should become somewhat acclimated, before going to the regions farther inland. Mr. Harris therefore proceeded alone on an overland journey to Shwegyin, and visited all the churches from which he had been so long separated. The welcome given him was cordial. Many of the Christians left their homes and followed him from village to village that they might listen to all the words that fell from his lips.

When the rainy season had fully set in and the passage for boats was opened to Rangoon, Mr. Harris went there for his wife and little daughter. After the return voyage of several days in a small, uncomfortable native boat, they were glad to see before them in the distance the town of Shwegyin. But as they came within hailing distance of the mission compound they were startled by hearing the words: "**The cholera! The cholera!**" The little company landed at once, and found that this dreadful disease had taken away many who were in health when Mr. Harris left them, and that others were ill and some were dying. Mr. Harris attended at once to the needs of the sick, but it was soon decided to dismiss the school, which had opened most hopefully, so that all might return to their jungle homes. The next day Mr. Harris himself was taken violently ill with the same disease. The day after Mrs. Harris came down with malarial fever, and so very soon they felt obliged to **flee to Rangoon for safety.**

Mr. and Mrs. Harris regained their health in Rangoon, and early the next dry season **retraced their steps** to their needy field. The Karens had now made arrangements which they hoped would conduce to their health and well-being. They had erected a house three days' journey from the town in Sau Doo-moo's village, where they wished to have a **school** opened in the more immediate vicinity of the churches. When all things were in readiness, the family started on their journey, and at the expiration of three days left their perch upon the elephant, and found themselves surrounded by happy-faced natives. Parties of young men and women came in from time to time bringing with them their own food, till the school numbered eighty scholars. The Karens had made everything as homelike as possible for the missionary and his family. One church had made a table, another a settee—both very awkward, to be sure—and these had been brought in long

distances for the comfort of the inmates of the new house. It was very touching to see the devotion of this simple-minded people and their desire to do everything in their power for those whom they loved, and who they knew had made sacrifices for their good. But when the school had been in progress only three weeks, **little Julia,** the daughter of Mrs. Harris, a child whom all had learned to love, was stricken down with a disease of the throat. In spite of all the remedies that were at hand, this sickness proved fatal in the short space of thirty-six hours.

Never before, said Sau Doo-Moo, had there been **such mourning** in that village. A tree was cut down, and a casket just large enough for the little body was fashioned out of it with the rude native ax, and with gentle hands the Karens helped to place in it the precious dust. Then they bound the whole about with coarse rattan, and sealed it with a kind of pitch to make it air-tight. Mrs. Harris had been ill of fever before the death of the child, and as Mr. Harris had some symptoms of the same disease it was deemed best to return with the body to their home in town. When all the preparations had been made, the casket was borne swung from the shoulders of loving Karens, and the solemn march began. The first night was spent in a rude zayat, the second in a tent spread in the jungle, and the third day the procession halted before the mission-house, from which so recently had gone out a hopeful and happy company. How sad was the journey only those who have had a mother's breaking heart can know. On the morning of the next day, which was the Lord's Day, Mrs. Harris was again taken very ill of fever. In the afternoon the remains of the little one were borne to their last resting place, and laid by the side of the two faithful ones who had gone before.

Little Julia was convicted of sin at a very early age, and, strangely for one so young, was under conviction for several months. At length about the time of her sixth birthday she said to her mother: "Mamma, I think I am a Christian." When asked why she thought so, she replied with a bright smile: "Because Jesus said, 'Ask, and it shall be given you,' and I have asked him for a new heart; and, Mamma, doesn't He always do just as He says He will?" This happened during the long voyage out from America to Burma. From that time on she was **a happy Christian,** and according to her ability **a real little missionary.** She never excused herself from taking a part in the prayer meeting whenever she was present, and her great desire was for the conversion of the heathen. Her simple, earnest, childish talk never failed to interest young and old alike, and it is believed that, few

as were her years on earth, she nevertheless sowed with her tiny hand seed which has since sprung up and **borne fruit** abundantly.

The school opened in town the following May with **encouraging prospects**. The Holy Spirit was present to bless, and a number of students were converted and baptized during the session. But during the latter part of the year Mrs. Harris suffered from frequent attacks of jungle fever, and as the news from their children in the home land was unfavorable, it became necessary for Mr. and Mrs. Harris to **return to America**. They took with them two Karen lads that they might be educated in this country and prepared for a more useful service among their countrymen. One of these was **Kah-chur,** then about fifteen years of age, who, when Sau Doo-moo returned to his native village some years before with a book, ran away from home, contrary to his father's commands, found the strange man with the book, and learned to read. He then returned home, the proud owner of a two-leaved tract. His father met him with derision, saying that now they should undoubtedly see a prodigy of learning. To his astonishment the little fellow brought out his tract and read it, and this was a performance so much more wonderful than anything he had thought possible that he could say no more and was soon converted, father and son being baptized not long after and uniting with the church. The other Karen lad whom Mr. and Mrs. Harris took with them to America was **Pah-kau-too,** the oldest son of Sau Tah-ree, an active sprightly youth of about eleven years of age. Both of these boys were taken to Hamilton, N. Y., studied at Madison (now Colgate) University, were graduated with honor, and later returned to their own country to do efficient service.

It may be of interest here to give a **translation of a letter** which was sent by the Shwegyin Karen Christians with a collection of two hundred rupees to the American Baptist Missionary Union during Mr. Harris' absence in America:

"Beloved brethren of other countries and cities in every place: We desire to write to you a few words about the disciples of Shwegyin. To every one who may see this letter we would say, Bear with us, and pray to God our Lord for us; for we here in Shwegyin have no missionary to instruct, encourage and help us, as they have in other places. We are like orphans, bereft of father and mother, left desolate, sleepy and hungry; in other words, we are like the wounded and fallen, without a physician. The reason of our sorrow is that during the year some have apostatized from the truth of the living God and returned to the customs of their forefathers, and some have become

unstable and wavering and restless like the waves of the sea. Therefore, beloved brethren in every place, bear with us and help us by your prayers. Teacher Cross of Toungoo does all he can for us, and through him we receive New Testaments and hymn books. During the year 1864 we have been consulting how to get back our Teacher Harris from America. We, the disciples of Shwegyin, have collected two hundred rupees toward paying the passage of Teacher Harris; therefore, dear brothers and sisters in every place, great and small, male and female, have pity on us; pray for us and assist us to get back our teacher.

(Signed) "Teacher Pah-Maw."

On the 7th of March, 1865, **Mr. Harris returned alone** to his field of labor, and was warmly welcomed by his people. At the annual meeting of the association which was held soon after, the **fine spirit of independence** of the native Christians was shown by the remark of Thra Pah-maw, one of their leading preachers, who, when the question arose as to whether they should accept grant-in-aid from the government for the support of the town school, as other missions were doing, said: "If we eat our own rice, I think we shall enjoy it the better."

In 1868 **Mrs. Harris joined her husband,** to the great joy of all who knew her. Although she was suffering from a gradual failure of vision, she entered into the work with her usual zeal, and made herself useful in the school so far as she was able. Sau Tah-ree, the first convert at Shwegyin, died that year. In 1870 Sau Doo-moo also passed away. The infant son, who was left in the hands of the Burmans when Sau Doo-moo forsook his home in despair and wandered away to Tavoy, had then grown up to become an honored member of the church. He did not long survive his father, but was killed by a tiger, leaving a wife and several children to mourn his untimely death.

As illustrating the opposition which the missionary frequently meets in his work, may be told the following **story** which at about that time began to be circulated among the heathen Karens by some evil-minded person:

"An old Karen lay at the point of death. Calling his children about him he spoke to them as follows: 'My dear children, I have something to tell you. When Teacher Harris came here, I was one of his first and most zealous followers. I had perfect confidence in him, and did everything that he said without doubt or question. But

when he had made about a dozen converts, he invited us to take a ride with him in his boat. We did so. He took us down the river and out to sea. There a great and wonderful ship awaited us with sails which were like wings and carried it faster than any ship we had ever seen before, faster even than the fastest clouds. The teacher made us go on board. The room which he occupied was luxuriously furnished and decorated with gold and silver. After sailing for many, many days, the ship stopped in its course near an island. By and by it began to be rumored that here on this island lived the Daw t'kah, a great monster which delights to devour human flesh. And surely enough, the Daw-t'kah himself soon came on board to bargain for us, and when he had poured out a roomful of gold for the teacher, he scooped the disciples off of the deck into his bag with one hand, as you would gather the crumbs from a table, and returned to his home. Fortunately for me, when I saw what was about to happen, I slipped out of sight, and dropped into the hold of the ship. There I was able to secrete myself until I knew we were well on our way home. Then I became so hungry that I was forced to leave my hiding place. I threw myself at the teacher's feet, and begged him to spare my life. At first he was very angry, and threatened to kill me with the most horrible cruelties, but after much entreaty on my part he finally consented to spare me on one condition. I was to keep all that I had seen a profound secret as long as I lived, and in the meantime I was to use all my influence in getting more converts for him. I have kept my promise faithfully, for I knew that if I did not the teacher would devise the most excruciating tortures for me. But now I am about to die, and I can keep the terrible secret no longer. Listen to what I say. Beware, beware of these Christian teachers!' "

In 1871 Mrs. Harris, on account of frequent and alarming attacks of fever, was obliged to return to America, leaving her husband alone. In the fall of 1873, however, a **new laborer** was added to the working force in the person of Kah-chur, one of the Karen boys who had been educated in America. His integrity of character soon won for him a high place in the esteem of his people. In a short time he was ordained to the gospel ministry, and entered upon his work with earnest zeal, and has ever since been a useful laborer, a wise and safe counsellor among his people. His father, who had anxiously watched for his return, was permitted to look once more on the face of his son, but left this world a few months after in the blessed hope of immortality beyond the grave. Many of Kah-chur's neighbors had professed to believe, during his long absence in America, that the missionary had

fed him to the Daw t'kah, the huge monster supposed to live on human flesh, and had declared their intention, if ever Kah-chur returned, to become Christians and worship his God. But when Kah-chur indeed returned and went among them, and urged them to keep their pledges, they refused to believe that he was the real Kah-chur, but said that he was a clever substitute. And from that day on the people of that generation have been singularly hardened against the gospel.

Mr. Harris had long been pleading for a missionary to be sent to his field who should be associated with him in the work and so prepare to take it up whenever he should be compelled to lay it down. In 1873 **Rev. B. P. Cross** and his wife were sent to Shwegyin. This was a source of great joy and satisfaction to Mr. Harris, especially as Mr. Cross was born and brought up in the country, and would soon be able to recall the language of the people so as to do effective work among them. But it was not long before the death of his mother, Mrs. E. B. Cross, in Toungoo, and he was called to that station to labor with his bereaved father.

In 1874 **a new chapel, a large dormitory** for the school, and a **dining hall,** with furniture suitable to a people who were rising in the scale of civilization, were built at Shwegyin, the whole expense being borne by Mr. Harris and the Karens. In 1875 **Pah-kau-too,** the oldest son of Sau Tah-ree, returned from America, having completed his education, but took up work in Rangoon instead of at Shwegyin. In the latter part of this year Mr. Harris began to suffer from frequent attacks of erysipelas, which grew more and more severe, and continued to affect him for a period of six months with little or no palliation. This made it necessary for him to return in 1876 to America. He left Kah-chur as an active laborer in the field, and as **Rev. and Mrs. H. W. Hale** had been sent a few months before to the Burmese department he requested this brother to take the general oversight of the Karen work.

Mr. Hale wrote as follows of the meeting of the association the succeeding year: "About two hundred men, women and children had come from one to two or three days' journey on foot, in order to enjoy the meeting, which was conducted entirely by Karens. Three or four villages made request for teachers, who were sent to them by the associational committee. One man had invited the guests, but having been burned out, most unfortunately, just before the meeting, did not feel able to provide for their stay over the Sabbath. It was therefore proposed to shorten the session, but when the heathen people in the vicinity heard of it, they brought in food in abundance that

the meetings might be continued. So nearly all the people remained till Monday, and enjoyed the three days' service of prayer, preaching and singing, and drawing nearer to God."

In 1877 Mr. Harris returned to his field of labor. On arriving at the station he found that Mr. and Mrs. Hale had gone home, and Kah-chur was occupying the field alone. **The Karens were still faithful** to the trust committed to them. The churches went on from year to year supporting their pastors and providing for the school in town as well as for the schools in their own villages. They also sent the gospel, so far as they were able, to the regions beyond. Mr. Harris, it is needless to say, was delighted with the spirit of independence of the people, and felt that the twenty-five years of training had not been in vain. As he felt the infirmities of age creeping upon him, however, **Rev. and Mrs. W. I. Price** were sent to his assistance. That was in the year 1880. In the following year Mr. Harris suffered from a return of the erysipelas, and in February, 1882, he was obliged to turn his face for the last time to the home land. He arrived safely at his home in Hamilton, N. Y., the following April, with partially restored health. From this time on he felt that he had a duty to his wife, now nearly blind. Formerly their son Edward had been with his mother, and afforded her needed companionship and assistance, but now his school days at Hamilton were finished and he must go elsewhere. Mr. Harris therefore spent his remaining days in quiet retirement. He died on the 1st of March, 1884. **Mrs. Harris** survived him a little over twenty years, passing away September 6, 1905. Although on account of repeated and complete failure of health and loss of sight she was permitted to be on the field only five or six years all told, yet the record of her service, as written in the hearts of the people, is a noble one. She made an excellent translation of the familiar hymn, "He Leadeth Me," and it is felt by many that, if she had done nothing else, it would be a work well worthy of a lifetime; for this is today the best known hymn in the language, and, if one may judge from the frequency with which one hears it, it would seem to be within bounds to say that scarcely a week passes when it is not sung in every one of the thousand Christian Karen villages of Burma. Probably it has already comforted and strengthened the hearts of over a hundred thousand of God's people among that race, and it seems destined to help other hundreds of thousands in the time to come. It means much to touch such a vast multitude of people in their spiritual life. To the last Mrs. Harris had a deep interest in the great cause for which she had made such high and holy sacrifice, and she parted cheerfully from her son, Rev. E. N. Harris, that he might go to take up the work which his father had laid down.

REVIEW AND SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF REV. NORMAN HARRIS—AN APPRECIATION.

It seems fitting to pause here for a brief review of the work of Rev. Norman Harris in the founding of the Shwegyin Karen mission and its development from the beginning up to the point now reached in the course of this narrative. And of that work it may be said that the more it is studied and known, the higher is the appreciation which it compels.

Attention has already been called briefly to the **fine spirit of independence shown by the Shwegyin Karens.** Almost from the very beginning they **supported their own churches and schools entirely,** conducted their own **missionary enterprises**, and performed **all the functions** pertaining to them as organized companies of Christian disciples. But let it not be supposed that all this came about by accident, or that it developed spontaneously out of the natural nobility of the people. There were undoubtedly among the Karen Christians of Shwegyin men of exceptional parts, like Teacher Pah-Maw, to whom reference has already been made, but whatever innate elements of strength these may have had would never have been developed and brought to the front, one may be sure, without **encouragement from the missionary.** And it is not too much to say that the noble spirit of independence of the Shwegyin churches was but the **reflection** of that same spirit of independence which enabled Mr. Harris to face the opposition of his family when a timid boy, and later to undertake the long struggle required to enable him to obtain a college education, and brought him through without a cent of indebtedness and under obligation to no one for help.

If now it be asked what **principles** guided Mr. Harris in the conduct of the Shwegyin mission and enabled him to develop these traits of independence and of power, it may be replied that, first of all, Mr. Harris seems to have acted on the principle that it was his part not so much to do things, to inaugurate movements, to get his people launched on enterprises, as to **plant in their minds and hearts truths, convictions, motives,** which would later spring up in deeds. Closely allied to this principle was the principle that he would do nothing which his people could do. Having planted the seed, he tended and watched it to be sure, but he was careful not to interfere with its own normal growth. He kept his hands off, and let it have its own way. For instance, as has already been pointed out, he seldom baptized his converts. He left that to the native ordained preachers. He always sought to honor their calling, to put them forward, keep-

ing himself in the background, and in every other way to **magnify the native work.** Still another principle on which he labored was that he would **inaugurate nothing which the native Christians could not carry on** in his absence and without his help. It is at once evident that these principles were **fundamental,** that they were of such a nature that, when conscientiously and faithfully applied, they could not help profoundly affecting the whole character of the work.

It is difficult at the present time to transfer one's self back in mind to the **early beginnings** of Karen mission work, but it is certain that at that time lines of missionary policy were adopted by some which were far from being best for the ultimate interests of the work. This is not to be wondered at. **New and strange conditions** had arisen. **Converts** were being gathered into the churches by hundreds and by thousands, as in no other modern mission previous to that time. It seemed that the entire Karen people were at once to become Christians, that the prophecy about a nation being born in a day was receiving fulfillment. And these new converts were all eager for an **education.** Never, even to this day, is a Karen converted but, no matter how dark his mind may have been before, he at once conceives a great hunger for knowledge. He may not have the natural capacity to acquire more than a very limited store of information, but the hunger is there, and he is rarely satisfied until he has at least made the attempt to appease it. And at the same time that the Karen conceives a craving for knowledge, he also becomes desirous of acquiring the **civilization** of his white brother. Conversion means the awakening of his entire being, and he wants all that will minister to his higher nature. And it was to be expected that the missionaries **would be responsive to the desires of their people.** The thought of bringing untutored races the benefits of civilization has always added a certain glamor and attractiveness to the missionary enterprise which it would not otherwise have had. And so the missionaries entered upon their work with tremendous enthusiasm. Astronomies and other books on **modern science** were prepared, illustrated with fine plates and engravings—doubtless taken from English works of the same kind—which now, with all the progress that has been made, would be considered unnecessarily elaborate. To outward appearance the **Karen was poor,** abjectly poor. He wore nothing but a bag-shaped jacket coming down to the knees, and it was not easy to see that as a matter of fact he might be, comparatively speaking, better off than his white brother, inasmuch as his necessities were fewer. And so the first impulse was to see him more suitably clothed. Money among the people was scarce. The

churches were not able to pay **salaries** to their pastors in money, or indeed in anything else, and so the missionary oftentimes paid salaries to the pastors under his care, and in some instances hired evangelists with his own money, or with money raised in America for the purpose, and sent them out to preach to the heathen. It was felt that the times were urgent, that advantage must be taken of the tremendous tide that was setting in, that the stupendous opportunities presenting themselves must be seized upon and utilized at once to the utmost possible extent.

In such circumstances it required no little **firmness of character and strength of conviction** to enable one to stand by the principles mentioned above as having been adopted by Mr. Harris. But the result has shown that in pursuing the policy which he did, Mr. Harris was wise. The plan pursued by some of **paying pastors and hiring evangelists was a mistake,** a perfectly natural one to be sure—what more natural than for the missionary, coming from a country in which pastors are supported more or less adequately by their churches, to think that there, also, pastors should be supported?—and yet it was a serious mistake, and wrought great detriment to the cause. For in those missions where this policy was pursued, the churches are to this day weak and backward. The tendency was for them to become pamperized. They learned to depend on the aid received, and felt that they could not do without it. In the beginnings of our best missions among the Karens, on the other hand, the pastors were not supported by the churches, but rather the **churches were supported by the pastors.** Those who were chosen as pastors in the first place were men who were naturally **leaders** among their people. They were men of ideas, men of aggressiveness, men who could think of things in the large, who could plan enterprises, and had the energy to carry them through. These men of foresight, in that day when the government of the country was changing hands, and a new era was dawning on the people not only spiritually but in every other way, saw here and there opportunities for improving the condition of their people, and seized them. Some obtained large grants of land from the government, invited the members of their churches to occupy it, and by gradual accretions from here and there built up thriving Christian communities. Others dug long irrigating ditches so as to extend the culture of the betel nut, which had become one of the most profitable of the natural products of the country, and in this way had accomplished the same object. Others found still other ways for leading their people, and, while ministering to their spiritual needs, ministering also to their temporal

necessities. Of course that condition of things could not always continue. It was not desirable that it should. Now with more settled conditions the churches are more and more undertaking the support of their pastors. But pastoral support of the church was right then, and, if in those missions where pastors were supported with money supplied by the missionary the churches are still weak, this is probably due quite as much to the fact that the churches were in this way deprived of the **splendid leadership** which some of the native pastors would have developed, as to the fact that **habits of independence can never be cultivated amid conditions of dependence.**

But principles and a policy of missionary procedure alone are not sufficient to account for the results attained by Mr. Harris. Back of the principles, back of the mere policy or method of procedure, there had to be the **strong personal character,** else these would have been in vain. Mr. Harris was devoted to his people, and they to him, and as one goes about among them now, one seems to see him **reflected** in their characters and in their lives. Mr. Harris was a man of great simplicity of manner and **plainness of dress,** and today they, unlike the members of other missions, eschew the use of ornaments. They say, to be sure, that they do this as a protest against the customs of the heathen, for the heathen can never perform their ceremonies unless their bracelets are on their hands and their ear-plugs are in their ears, and they never dare lay aside their necklaces lest their spirits may wander and, returning, find nothing to clasp and help themselves back into the body with. But who can doubt that loving imitation of their missionary is the real strength of their present custom? In common with the other races of the far east the Karens are naturally fatalistic. They submit to the inevitable in a way which is quite marvelous to people of the west. But the members of the Shwegyin Karen churches have a Christian resignation which is far better than fatalism, and it seems possible to attribute this fact only to their witnessing the wonderfully calm **spirit of resignation** on the part of their missionary. To see a man whom they so greatly loved enduring for their sakes separation from all that he held dear, and moving among them without a word of complaint, with only kindly smiles and cheerful words for them and theirs, must have meant much in their spiritual life. Mr. Harris was a man of **prayer.** To this day there is a tradition among the Karens of Shwegyin telling how on one Sunday morning when he was to preach, the people gathered at the usual time in the house of God, but he did not appear, and as the time lengthened and still he did not come, one of the men went over to his house

to make inquiries, and as he drew near he heard the voice of the missionary lifted in prayer, and as he prayed he said: "Lord, I cannot go except Thou go with me. Give me a message to this people, else my lips will be sealed." The man did not interrupt the prayer, but stole back and told the people. And when later the missionary appeared, they felt that he did indeed have a message of God to their souls. And today the Shwegyin Karens believe in prayer.

To summarize in a single word, the dominant characteristic of the work of Mr. Harris was **solidity.** He built up an enduring edifice. He chose methods which were not calculated to make any show or display, but have resulted in genuine achievements which some who were much more in the public eye failed to attain. A more efficient body of native Christians than he trained up is probably nowhere to be found today.

A FORWARD MOVEMENT.

It is the intention from this point on to deal with the **growth and development of the native churches** rather than with the doings of **individual missionaries.** For those who are interested in **the latter,** it may be sufficient to say, that soon after Mr. Harris left Shwegyin, the health of Mrs. Price failing, she and her husband were obliged to seek a more favorable climate. Later Rev. David Smith was appointed to this field. He reached Shwegyin January 8, 1885. After four or five years he returned to America, and his place was taken by Rev. E. J. Miller. In a few months Mr. Miller was transferred to Rangoon to take charge of the mission press, and the Shwegyin Karens were left without a missionary, except when Mr. Miller returned to them for a few months, until Rev. E. N. Harris, the youngest son of Rev. Norman Harris, the founder of the mission, was appointed to the field. He with his wife, a daughter of Rev. Thomas Allen, one of the early missionaries to the Burmans, reached Shwegyin November 17, 1893, and has continued in charge ever since except as he has been obliged to return to America twice on account of ill-health in his family.

Mention should also be made here of the **single women** who, as well as the wives of the missionaries in charge, have rendered valiant and valuable service. The Shwegyin mission had never had a representative of the Women's Societies until Miss H. E. Hawkes came to it from Bassein in 1894. She has won for herself a warm place in the hearts of the people, and has retained her connection with the mission from that time to this with the exception of a single brief

REV. EDWARD NORMAN HARRIS

furlough. At one time she ably represented it for about two years in connection with the work at Papun, an account of which is to be given farther on in the course of this history. In the fall of 1899 Miss S. T. Ragon came to Shwegyin from Maulmein, and did a very important service until ill-health obliged her to return to America four years later. In December, 1903, Miss I. Watson, who for many years performed a distinguished service in connection with the Bassein Sgaw Karen mission, came to Shwegyin from furlough in America, and went almost at once with Miss Hawkes to Papun, where after a heroic career, fitting close to a noble life, she died October 4, 1906. In 1905 Miss K. K. Bendelow, coming out for the first time from America under appointment to Kengtung, was transferred to Shwegyin, where she has remained ever since as the efficient superintendent of the mission school. In 1906 Miss M. M. Larsh, who during a former period of service won an enviable record in connection with the Karen mission school at Henzada, came to Nyaunglebin, and has ably represented the mission there. The women of the mission do a work which is less conspicuous than that of the men, but it has often proved to be quite as valuable.

During the period which has thus been briefly outlined, the **churches** of the Shwegyin mission have maintained a steady growth. In 1885 they numbered 29, with 1,104 members. In 1893, when the present missionary took charge of the field, they numbered 45, with about 1,650 members. In 1907 they numbered 70, with 2,778 members. The period of greatest interest and most remarkable growth dates from the year 1899, when **a forward movement** was begun, which bids fair to mean much for the future history of the mission. In order that this forward movement may be adequately understood, it will be necessary to explain briefly the geographical condition of the field.

When the mission was established in 1853, Shwegyin was a town of considerable importance. It was the headquarters of a political district, corresponding somewhat to the capital of a state, and had a considerable English population, including a detachment of the British army which was stationed there. At that time the Sittang River, on which Shwegyin is situated, was the main highway of travel between Rangoon or Maulmein and Toungoo. The consequence was that Shwegyin served as an **admirable center** from which to reach the outlying regions. The government officials were obliged to make frequent tours into these parts, and kept the roads well open. Whenever any one living in the district had any matters with the government or at court—and litigation means much more in the life of the

native of those regions of the world than it does to the American—he had to come to Shwegyin to attend to them. But in 1885 the railroad was put through between Rangoon and Toungoo, and, its chief purpose being to develop the agricultural resources of the rich alluvial plain of the Sittang River, it left Shwegyin from twelve to fifteen miles to one side, for Shwegyin town is located at the extreme eastern side of that plain on the first rise of the foot-hills of what are known as the Eastern Yomas. The result was to **deflect the lines of travel** very decidedly from the Sittang River. For while the Oriental is commonly reputed to be, and really is, slow, he is as impatient of traveling by a slow means of conveyance as any one, if a more rapid one is open to him. The railroad has really been a great blessing to the country, for it has opened up vast tracts of land which it was not worth while cultivating before, and enormously developed the export trade in rice, the chief agricultural product, increasing the value of that commodity many fold. But the native thinks of the railroad in no such light. He thinks of it as simply a clever scheme on the part of the government to get money out of his pocket. "For," says he, "when I see the cars going by choo choo at such a tremendous rate, how can I help wanting to ride?" The fare for the third class, by which most of the natives travel, is half a cent a mile, so that the complaint of the native about the extortion of his money seems not to be well founded, but it shows how impossible the slow river route became to him after the railroad was opened up. For ten years Shwegyin gradually decreased in importance, until in 1895 the **headquarters of the district were removed,** and the old Shwegyin district was divided between the Toungoo, Pegu, and Thatone districts. From this time on the mission was seriously handicapped in its work. Not only had the lines of travel been diverted from Shwegyin, but the roads being no longer kept open as before fell more and more into disrepair, and the people no longer had to come to Shwegyin on business at court or with the government. In a word Shwegyin had **ceased to be a strategic center for work.** For the missionary cannot do his best work on the field unless he sees his people any more than the pastor in this country can do his best work unless he comes in contact with the members of his flock.

The condition described above was accentuated by the fact that Shwegyin had not only ceased to be a good center from which to reach the field as a whole, but **from the first had never been centrally located with reference to the churches.** The home of Sau Doo-moo, the Christian Karen who wrought so wonderfully in the beginning

of the mission, was about fifty miles, or a journey of two days or two days and a half to the north of Shwegyin, and it was among the surrounding villages that he had his chief success in preaching. The consequence was that to this day **two-thirds of the churches** connected with the Shwegyin mission are located **a journey two or three days north of Shwegyin,** and actually nearer to Toungoo than to Shwegyin. Of **the remaining third** all but one or two are located **out on the plains near the railroad.** So long as Shwegyin District continued in existence, all of the churches being within it, no serious difficulty was experienced. But after the division of the Shwegyin District, Shwegyin itself and all of the churches to the north came within the **Toungoo District,** and the members of those churches began to say, "Let us move the mission station from Shwegyin to Toungoo," and some of them actually began looking for a site in Toungoo for the location of the mission. On the other hand the churches out on the plains to the west came within the **Pegu District,** and the members of these churches began to say, "Let us move the mission station from Shwegyin to Pegu." Thus **a rupture was threatened,** a rupture which seemed pregnant with disastrous consequences. For it was felt that to move the station to either Toungoo or Pegu would be to leave the original field of the Shwegyin mission, containing according to the government census **from a quarter to a third of the entire Sgaw Karen population of Burma,** practically deserted; for no matter how determined missionary and people might be to work the field from either of these points, it would be practically impossible to do so.

The need, therefore, that in some way the people should be held to the great work which it belonged to them as to no other people under heaven to do, became increasingly urgent. But nothing would perhaps have been done but for a remark which was made to Mr. Harris by one of the older missionaries not long after he went out to the field in 1893. This older missionary said that in order to their best prosperity **the native churches needed to have foreign mission fields of their own.**

A few years before leaving America Mr. Harris had had his attention called very forcibly to the **history of the Baptist denomination in America** as showing the healthy reactionary effect of the foreign missionary enterprise on those engaged in it. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Baptists of the United States numbered about seventy thousand, a poor, scattered, feeble folk, with little of common interest or cohesion. Shortly after that they divided about equally on the subject of missions, thirty-five thousand of them be-

coming mission Baptists, and thirty-five thousand becoming anti-mission Baptists. It was at the time when Dr. Adoniram Judson sent back his thrilling appeals from Burma for help. The mission Baptists heard the call and responded. The anti-mission Baptists, on the other hand said—what is said by many who perhaps would not be known by their name today—" Why should we send missionaries to foreign lands? We have not enough pastors to meet our own needs. No; if God wants to convert the heathen, he can do it without any of our aid." What has been the result? Why, if one could believe all that one hears in this country even nowadays about foreign missions one would perhaps think that the mission Baptists would steadily have diminished until by this time they must have become extinct. But it has not operated that way. It has had rather the contrary effect, like the story that is circulated about a certain sportsman. Up in the Shwegyin District there was a " rogue " elephant, for the destruction of which the government had offered a reward of money in addition to the tusks. This sportsman went up with his elephant rifle to hunt the animal. He found it. He fired one shot and the great beast fell, apparently dead. But to make sure the sportsman fired again. The elephant moved slightly. The sportsman fired a third time. The elephant moved a little more. He fired again and again, each shot seeming to have a revivifying effect, until at the sixth shot the elephant got up and ran away. The Karens tell the story with great gusto. How many " recensions " it has gone through, to use a favorite term with the higher critics, it is impossible to say. But certain it is that the more hot shot of foreign missions is poured into the churches of God anywhere and in whatever conditions, the livelier they become. The mission Baptists of America, instead of diminishing have increased, not two-fold or three-fold, but ten-fold, a hundred-fold, a hundred-and-fifty-fold, until the scattered thirty-five thousand have become a mighty host five million strong. And from being the tail they have become well-nigh the head, foremost, perhaps, in their educational endowments, in the effectiveness of their denominational enterprises, and in their equipment for every good work. The anti-mission Baptists, on the other hand, have steadily diminished until now they are scarcely to be found at all.

So when the old and experienced missionary said to Mr. Harris that in order to attain their best prosperity the Karen churches needed to have foreign mission enterprises of their own, the suggestion came to him with convincing power, and he began almost at once casting about for a suitable **foreign field for the Shwegyin churches.** After

giving considerable thought to the matter, he decided on a large, important, and almost wholly unevangelized territory adjoining the Shwegyin field on the east in what is known as the Salween District, with Papun (pronounced Pah-poon) as its headquarters.

The Salween District was not altogether new mission territory to the Shwegyin Karens. When the elder Mr. Harris was on the field, he used to make yearly tours into this region, and once actually succeeded in organizing a church in the city of Papun. But owing to grievous lapses this church soon passed out of existence, and during the interim of twelve years between the departure of the elder Mr. Harris from the field and the arrival of his son, when the Shwegyin mission had no permanent missionary to pursue an established policy, the work in the Salween field was discontinued. Later a missionary from Maulmein, having his attention called to the field by people passing that way, became interested and got the Maulmein association of Karen churches to undertake the work. This association had now been engaged about ten years. They sent an evangelist to Papun, paying half of his salary themselves and securing the other half from the Burma Baptist Convention, an organization which is intended as the general agency of the churches of the country for the prosecution of missionary work, and this evangelist had succeeded in organizing two Karen churches, one at Papun itself with about forty members, and the other at the village of Bwah-der (accent on the last syllable), fifteen miles east of Papun, with about the same number of members. The Bwah-der church had a pastor of its own, whom it was supporting, and so there were two native workers in the field.

Mr. Harris now determined to **reclaim,** if possible, the field which had once been in a manner pre-empted by his father, and so after visiting Papun once or twice in person and becoming acquainted with the native Christians there, he suggested at a meeting of the Shwegyin association that a committee should be appointed to visit the Maulmein association, and request them as a favor to relinquish their operations there, and turn the field over to the Shwegyin mission. The suggestion was adopted, and after a friendly conference the Maulmein association agreed to the proposal, with the understanding that the two churches which had already been organized should be free to retain their connection with the Maulmein association or to join that of Shwegyin, as they might prefer. As a matter of fact, these churches retained their connection with Maulmein for two or three years, and then formed an association of their own.

The Shwegyin association entered upon its new obligations with **zeal and true consecration.** At first it was planned simply to retain the evangelist who had been employed by the Maulmein association, and to send over additional workers as they might be required. Accordingly arrangements were made to assume the support of this evangelist, who was a man of no little energy and power, and, as the Papun church already owned a small piece of land on which were located its little chapel and a few other buildings, a piece of land near by was purchased for the use of the workers of the Shwegyin association who might later be sent to the field. But within less than six months from the time when the Shwegyin mission took over the work, the Maulmein evangelist died of cholera, that terrible disease which is always endemic in the country. It then became incumbent on the Shwegyin association to bend itself to its newly assumed task with resoluteness and determination. And to their honour be it said that the churches acquitted themselves in a manner worthy of their high calling. It was **a notable occasion.** The association was assembled in annual session. For many months, or ever since hearing of the death of the evangelist at Papun, the missionary had been wondering who should be sent to take his place. He felt that it ought to be some man of ability and character, who could be trusted to take hold of the work and carry it forward with vigor and power. But he could think of no one who he thought would be available for the important post. But to his surprise, when he came up to the meetings, the leaders among the Karens said it must be Thrah Kah-nah, the ordained pastor of one of the best churches. The missionary had never once dared to think of him. He seemed indispensable to his own church; he was one of the most beloved of the native pastors, and the missionary had no thought that it would be considered possible to dispense with his services on the home field. But when his name was suggested by the Karens themselves, of course the missionary could raise no objection. But it was not without a struggle that the appointment was made. As soon as his name was mentioned, members of Thrah Kah-nah's church who were present, arose and objected, some of them angrily. "Why should you choose our pastor?" they said. "The members of our church are for the most part widows and orphans. Our pastor is like a father to us. We cannot spare him. Choose some one else. There are many others." After they had talked awhile, the missionary arose and said, "I do not wonder that the members of Thrah Kah-nah's church feel this way, for we all love the brother, and it is indeed as they say—many of the members of their church are

widows and orphans. But now before we talk any more about this matter, let us go to God with it." Earnest prayer was offered, and after the prayer it was truly affecting to see those same men who had so angrily demurred a few minutes before, rise and say, that if this was of the Lord, they dared not oppose it. A committee was appointed to visit the church, and give it what comfort and consolation and what strengthening of purpose in the Lord it was able, and Thrah Kah-nah was sent forth to do a good and acceptable work. This was in the year 1900.

But at about the same time that the work in the Salween District was first being contemplated, the need of doing something to overcome the difficulties which were confronting the mission in its own **home work** at Shwegyin was becoming more and more urgent. The churches were becoming increasingly restless. The missionary felt that the best cure for this condition was an extension movement on the home field corresponding to the extension movement which was being undertaken on the more distant field. He recalled having heard **a veteran pastor in America** tell how at one time, when his church was heavily burdened with debt, he preached a sermon on foreign missions and so fervently urged his people to give to that cause that his deacons came to him after the sermon, and remonstrated with him, saying, "Don't you know, pastor, that we cannot afford to have our people give largely for foreign missions, because we have this heavy debt on us, and we must use all our powers to raise that?" The pastor said nothing, but a few Sundays later he preached from the text, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." And as he presented the needs of the home church, his words were accompanied with such power that his people gave as they had never given before, and when afterward the sum of their giving was counted up, it was found that, behold, the heavy debt which had so long burdened them had vanished away. The pastor always attributed the success of that endeavor to the previous preaching of the foreign mission sermon, and the opening of his people's hearts to the world-wide work.

And so the missionary believed that the time of undertaking work on the distant field was the best time for undertaking work on the home field, and as he went about among the churches he suggested that **two out-stations** be opened, one at **Kyaukkyi** (pronounced Chouk-jee'), a town of 1,500 or 2,000 inhabitants located about thirty-five miles directly north of Shwegyin and the other at Nyaunglebin

(pronounced N'yaung-lay'-bin), a thriving town on the railroad about twelve miles in a straight line west of Shwegyin. This suggestion was taken up with the utmost enthusiasm. "Why, yes," the people said, "if we can begin work over in the Salween District, of course we can do something here at home," and when they came together at the annual meeting of the association they voted to set aside one thousand rupees for the purchase of land at the out-stations, and chose four of their very best men for the work, two for each out-station. **From that time on the activities of the churches fairly leaped forward.** Nothing more was heard about moving the main station from Shwegyin to Toungoo or to Pegu, and the contributions of the churches for all objects showed a most gratifying increase. In 1893 these contributions, aside from a special contribution which was being raised for the erection of a school and chapel-building at Shwegyin, amounted to about 5,000 rupees. The value of the rupee in gold, that is, in ordinary American currency, is about $0.33, but as the average wage of the common laborer is less than half a rupee a day, the rupee should be reckoned, for purposes of comparison, as equivalent to about $3 or $4. On this basis it will be seen that 7,500 rupees coming from fewer than 2,000 disciples represented a high degree of liberality among the churches. But under the inspiration of the forward movement the contributions of the churches for all purposes rose in 1899 to over 10,000 rupees, in 1900 to over 14,000 rupees, and in 1901 to over 20,000 rupees, nearly a three-fold increase in three years' time. In 1902 the contributions fell off to between 16,000 and 17,000 rupees, but the next year they rose to over 36,000 rupees. Meanwhile the annual additions to the churches by baptism rose from about 100 to 175 or 200, and, apparently because of the new spirit which came upon the people, the number of young men who consecrated themselves to the work of the gospel ministry and went to the theological seminary at Insein for the purpose of preparing themselves for that work, increased from three or four in 1893 to eighteen in 1906. At the same time schools were built in these out-stations which, without drawing appreciably from the attendance of the Shwegyin station school with its 125 pupils, gathered in from 200 to 250 pupils, mostly from heathen villages, and thus began reaching out with their evangelizing influences into the out-lying regions in a way which, so far as one can judge, would not otherwise have been possible. And all this was accomplished under God by the unaided efforts of the native Christians themselves with only the most general oversight and suggestion on the part of the missionary.

The progress of this forward movement has from the first been **most inspiring.** The work has grown beyond anything that the missionary thought or planned. It has been a good deal as he once said to the people. Some of the Karen brethren came to him just before he returned home on furlough in 1900, and said to him, "Teacher, what are we to do? You put upon the churches the heavy work at these three out-stations, and when you get it thoroughly strapped on, as you strap down your loads on your pack ponies, so that we cannot shake it off, you leave us." " Oh, no," the missionary replied, " that is not the way to look at it. Why, you can set a child of six or seven years to caring for chickens, but for a buffalo you have to have a lad of ten or twelve, and when it comes to an elephant, you have to have a full grown man. Now, when we began this work, I did not suppose we should have anything more than chickens for several years, but it's a buffalo already, and I must hurry home and have my furlough so as to get back here in time for the elephant."

For many years, in fact as far back as the days of the elder Mr. Harris the plan of opening **a school or out-station at Kyaukkyi** had been discussed more or less, and the year before it was actually begun, that is, in 1898, the missionary, at the earnest solicitation of one of the leading Karen pastors, had stopped at Kyaukkyi on his way home from the annual meeting of the association, and looked about for a suitable site, but finding nothing that pleased him, returned home. That was in February. During the next rainy season disquieting reports were circulated to the effect that the **Roman Catholics** had actually gone into Kyaukkyi and established themselves there; that they had already secured land, had obtained from the government a free grant of logs, had hired sawyers to cut up the logs,, and were to proceed immediately to put up houses and buildings which a French priest was to occupy. When the people of the mission heard this, they were not a little disconcerted. The missionary remembers especially a prayer- and conference-meeting in the chapel at Shwegyin when Teacher Samuel, the headmaster of the school, rose and said he could not understand how this came about. "Here," he said, "when the elder Mr. Harris was living, he talked about starting an out-station at Kyaukkyi, but he left without doing anything about it, and when Mr. Smith came, he did the same, and Mr. Miller likewise, and, when the present incumbent came, he also talked, but did nothing. But while we have been talking and talking and doing nothing, the Roman Catholics have come in and usurped the field." But, although the headmaster expressed himself thus strongly, the missionary's con-

science did not upbraid him, and so he prayed that in some way this new embarrassment might be removed. And a little later it was learned that, although the Catholic priest had obtained a grant of logs from the government, the location of the forest reserve from which he was to cut them not proving satisfactory to him, he had with his own hand changed the name of the reserve on his permit and cut the logs accordingly, and when the forest officer in charge learned of it, it angered him so that he **confiscated all the logs** and was only with difficulty dissuaded from bringing a charge of forgery against the man and getting him put in jail. Then a little later, when the rains were over and the traveling season opened, **the wife of the civil officer** in charge of the sub-division in which Shwegyin was now located, an excellent Christian woman whom Mr. Harris had baptized a short time before, sent word to the missionary urging him to apply for land without fail, when he should go up to Kyaukkyi. Mr. Harris replied that he understood the Roman Catholics already had land there, and he feared there would be no use in his applying, but she informed him that they had done nothing in that direction yet. And so, when he reached Kyaukkyi soon after on his way to make his annual tour among the churches, he stopped to look again for a suitable site. He would probably have obtained only a very inferior location had he not providentially fallen in with **a Burman official** who had heard the gospel from the lips of Rev. Mr. Hale, and, although he had not professed conversion to Christianity, was very profoundly impressed by it. This man took Mr. Harris around, and showed him **two or three sites** which the missionary had not supposed would be at all available, as they were in close proximity to Buddhist pagodas and temples, and said to him that the citizens of the place would welcome the mission workers and that he would give his personal assurance that if any one of the sites was applied for, no objection would be raised by the village headmen. So Mr. Harris had a piece of ground staked out in **a fine location** somewhat secluded from the town but right on the main highway to the leading pagoda, made a rude map of it, and sent in his application to the government at once. The Roman Catholics did actually put in an application later, and got a site which was nearly as good, put up buildings on it, and sent a French priest to start a mission, but his efforts proved to be futile, his mission a complete failure, and after a few months he was recalled and his buildings torn down.

The Karen who was put in charge of the Baptist mission at Kyaukkyi, Thrah Pah-n'yah-say, was a young man of unusual ability

and consecration. He was graduated from the theological seminary at Insein in the spring of 1893, and later was placed by the committee of the association in charge of a little church of about ten members. It was partly to give such men as he a sphere of labor commensurate with their abilities that Mr. Harris conceived the idea of opening these out-stations. This young man did not disappoint expectations. He entered into the work with great zeal and enthusiasm. He solicited aid among the churches, and soon was able to put up a little building for a school. Then he looked about for teachers, and finding several who were willing to undertake the work with him, he opened a common school of four grades. He succeeded in imparting to those who were associated with him something of his own spirit, and soon **the fame of this little school** with its wide-awake, enthusiastic teachers spread through the jungles and up into the mountains, until pupils began pouring in from long distances, some of them two or three or even five days' journey, to attend it. Best of all, many of these pupils were **converted,** and caught the spirit of the leader, and consecrated themselves to the work of the gospel ministry, so that in 1906 eight or ten, who but a few years before were sunken in the depths of heathen superstition, were studying in the theological seminary at Insein. And the work is constantly broadening and deepening.

Thrah Pah-n'yah-say tells a rather **amusing incident** of a French Catholic priest who had succeeded in establishing himself in a village up in the mountains about a day's journey northeast of Kyaukkyi. This priest had been received by the people, probably on the promise of his helping them in some case at court—for the Roman Catholic priests in Burma have won for themselves a reputation not unlike that which they hold in China. The villagers put up a chapel for him, and probably professed to become his disciples, at least tentatively. Later he returned to Rangoon for his personal effects, but left word for the people to meet him at Kyaukkyi on a certain day, when he would return. But it seems that for some reason they had tired of him. They came to Kyaukkyi on the appointed date, but before going to see him they called in on Thrah Pah-n'yah-say, telling him of their dissatisfaction. Thrah Pah-n'yah-say urged them to be frank with the man, and tell him plainly, if they did not want him, but they said they did not dare talk that way to a white man. That evening after the interview with the priest they came again to Thrah Pah-n'yah-say. He asked them what they had said. "We told him," they replied, "that we thought he would better not return to the village." "What did the priest say to that?" "He asked us why, and we told him that

we were not all of one mind as at first." "What did he say to that?" "Oh, he said that he would go anyway." "What did you say then?" "We told him that besides our being divided in opinion our chapel had blown down." "What did he say to that?" "He looked rather incredulous, and said he would go up to-morrow and see." "Well," asked Thrah Pah-n'yah-say, "has your chapel really blown down?" "Oh, no; it is still standing, as good as ever." "Well, then," said Thrah Pah-n'yah-say, "he will catch you in a lie, and white folks do not like people to tell falsehoods." "Oh, well, we will attend to that," replied the villagers. And surely enough they did, for early next morning long before light they made off for their village, and when the priest, who started at a more reasonable hour, reached the place, the chapel looked as if a tornado had struck it. The man gazed on the scene of desolation, and without a word retraced his steps. The Baptist mission now has at that village one of its most vigorous churches, and from this church have gone several of the young men who are studying for the ministry.

The work at **Nyaunglebin** has met with **peculiar difficulties,** but it has been no less **inspiring,** and has been prosecuted with no less **vigor** on the part of the Karen Christians than has that at Kyaukkyi. Through an official Mr. Harris was providentially enabled to secure about **thirty acres of land** in the best available location. This was on the 6th of April, 1899. On the next day he turned the land over to the Karen brethren who had been chosen to have charge of the work, and said to them, "Brethren, my hands are already full. I can do nothing here. But I shall be glad of anything you can do." **The Karens were at once up and at it.** On the 1st of June they had buildings completed, and started a common school with an attendance of between 30 and 40 pupils. It was hoped that this school would meet the needs of the field for a number of years, but it soon became evident that it would not. The English government has two school systems, the one including the common schools of the country, and the other comprising the schools in which English is taught. Schools belonging to the latter system are under the control of English inspectors, and the instruction in them is required to be much more thoroughgoing than in the other schools. There were already many good common schools in the villages on the plains, and, unlike the people about Kyaukkyi, who were largely simple-minded mountaineers, the people about Nyaunglebin, coming as they did into frequent contact with a more civilized life, wanted their children to attend **the better grade of schools.** So after four or five years of vain effort to bring up the at-

tendance of the school to a more satisfactory condition, Mr. Harris suggested to the committee which had been appointed by the association to assist in the oversight of this work, that they erect a **larger building**, and set about in earnest to make the school what it ought to be. He had no thought that a building costing more than 3,000 or 4,000 rupees would be put up, but the committee got together one time in his absence and decided on **a much larger plan**, and what was his astonishment, when he next visited Nyaunglebin, to see the foundations laid for a great building to cost about 20,000 rupees. Had Mr. Harris been consulted, he would not have advised so large an expenditure, and later he had some occasion to rue it, as one of the Karens who had agreed to bear the brunt of the enterprise financially, got into straits, and was unable to meet in full the obligations he had tacitly assumed, and so a heavy debt hung over the churches for a year or two, like a pall. And yet **the Lord's hand** seems to have been in it, for not long after the government cast jealous eyes on the broad acres of the mission, and contemplated appropriating them for the purpose of extending the boundaries of the Nyaunglebin municipality, and would undoubtedly have done so but for that great building.

But the question of **changing the character of the school** was by no means settled by the completion of the new building. The **Director of Public Instruction** was opposed to enrolling the school on the list of those which were placed under the supervision of English inspectors. The chief objection he raised was the existence of the Roman Catholic school of the same grade in the same town. He said there was no room for the two schools in such close proximity, and that they would necessarily conflict with each other. But, while the Roman Catholic mission at Nyaunglebin was started with the idea of working among the Karens, it has met with little success. The Karens of those parts are credited with having **a saying** handed down among the elders for many generations which runs somewhat as follows: "Children and grandchildren, in the last days many different faiths will arise. Be not led hither and thither by them. When you find one that does away with the whiskey still, that is good enough. Take it." Roman Catholicism does not do away with the whiskey still, and it has met with little success in its work about Nyaunglebin. The consequence has been that the Roman Catholic school has been obliged to content itself for the most part with such pupils of other races as it could get from the town itself, **where no Karens live.** It was certain on the other hand that the Baptist mission school would draw its pupils almost exclusively from the Karens living in villages of their own scattered

about over the plains around Nyaunglebin. Thus there would be no competition between the two schools. This fact was pointed out, and on an appeal being taken to the Lieutenant Governor the recognition of the Baptist Mission school at Nyaunglebin as a school of the desired character, was ordered.

Even the governmental recognition of the Nyaunglebin school did not solve all the difficulties presented by the work. The Education Department requires that **teachers** in such schools as are here described shall have had special normal training, and the demand for qualified teachers is so much greater than the supply, that many large and well-established schools have great difficulty in keeping themselves supplied. But **the Karens were equal to the emergency.** When the time came for the opening of their little primary school, they had **a full corps of qualified teachers** on hand all of whom could have demanded much larger salaries elsewhere, and some of whom would have been eagerly sought for by secondary schools and even by high schools, had they been willing to accept positions in them. And then, when the people had done all they could for the cause, by what seems like a direct intervention of Divine Providence—which has so often wrought wondrously in the history of the Shwegyin mission—**Miss M. M. Larsh** was sent to superintend the work. The school in this latter part of the year 1907 has an attendance of 130 or more pupils, well filling the great building which was erected for it, and it is planned to raise the standard year by year until it becomes **a secondary school of full rank**, or perhaps even a high school. As there is a large Karen population in the villages around, and the district is one of the most populous Karen districts in Burma, there is good reason to expect that the attendance will rise in the course of a few years to three or four hundred, and the school become one of the strongest of its kind in the country. Best of all, it is believed that it will act—indeed it is already acting—as **a powerful evangelizing agency,** reaching out into non-Christian communities and exerting an influence which, so far as one can judge, would be otherwise impossible.

It seems fitting to pay here a brief tribute to **Thra Maw-koo-loo,** the Karen preacher who was chosen at the beginning to take charge of the work at Nyaunglebin. He was a man of exceptional ability and spiritual power. As an expounder of the Scriptures he had few equals among his people, and few, perhaps, that would surpass him anywhere. He was singularly sweet in character. Owing to an error of his younger days, he was never ordained, but he bore the stigma that was thus placed upon him without complaint. As a quiet and

unostentatious, yet powerful, leader of the people he was exceptionally gifted. He is believed to have represented all that is best in the distinctive piety of the Shwegyin Karens, and he gathered about him a coterie of strong men who, coming largely from other parts of Burma, experienced under his ministry as it were a new conversion, and consecrated themselves with fresh zeal to the work of God. He has now gone to his reward. May many more be raised up to take his place.

It remains now to **complete the account of the work at the outstation of Papun.** As has already been stated, when the Shwegyin mission took over the work in the Salween District, there were two churches there, one only of which was supporting its pastor, the pastor of the other church being supported in part by the Maulmein association and in part by the Burma Baptist Convention. As neither of these men was ordained, whenever there were any converts who wished to be baptized they had to wait for an ordained man to come up from Maulmein, which usually occurred only about once a year. This had been a source of no little dissatisfaction on the part of the Salween Karens. But when at a great sacrifice to themselves the Shwegyin Karens sent over one of their best ordained preachers to take up the work of the unordained evangelist who had died—whether from gratitude for the generosity of the Shwegyin Karens, or from catching something of their spirit of independence is not known, but—almost at once the Salween brethren began to show **a most commendable zeal.** To begin with, they offered to **support Thrah Kah-nah** themselves, and asked that **more teachers and evangelists** should be sent to them. Very soon they began to bestir themselves for the erection of **a school and chapel building** at Papun, and it was not long before they had actually completed a building of the kind costing about 10,000 rupees. Not long after they formed a little **association of their own.** The leaders among them said: "We are too far away from either Shwegyin or Maulmein for our people to attend the associations on those fields in any considerable numbers, and we want our people to learn how to carry on the work of the kingdom of God. The best way for them to learn is for us to have an association of our own." And so they formed an association with officers and committees and a **complete organization** for the carrying on of the work both among the churches and among the heathen. And it was not long before this little Salween association actually took over from the great Rangoon association its missionary operations in the Mainlungyi District of Northern Siam, thus making **foreign missions at a third remove** from the churches in America. For several successive years the **contributions** of this asso-

ciation with fewer than 100 church members all told aggregated between 5,000 and 6,000 rupees annually, and the regular meetings of the association are attended with rare interest and enthusiasm, not infrequently four or five times as many heathen being present as Christians.

It was at about this time, or, to be more precise, in the spring of 1903, when the school and chapel building had been completed, that the Karen brethren of the Salween District asked Mr. Harris to get **a missionary lady** for them. In reply he asked them what they would ever do with a mama (the usual designation of a missionary lady) if they had one. "You have no place to put her." "Oh, well," they said, "trust us for that. You get the mama, and we will build a house for her." Mr. Harris explained that it was against the policy of the missionary societies to establish any new mission stations among the Karens, and that, even if this were not the case, available ladies for such work were very few. But the Karen brethren would be disheartened by no objections. They went to work to make ready for a mama by **putting up a house for her to live in,** costing about 4,000 rupees. It was **an act of faith.** And their faith did not go unrewarded, for in January, 1904, the Lord sent them two mamas, Miss Watson and Miss Hawkes, who did a most devoted and loving service among them.

When Mr. Harris took these two ladies over to Papun, he could not resist the temptation to **jolly the Salween brethren** a little. One peculiarity of the Karen language is that the distinction between the singular and plural numbers is not always nicely observed, so that a noun may be used in either the singular or the plural sense without a change of form. So Mr. Harris said to the Salween Karens: "It must be that you brethren have been altogether too indefinite in your prayers. You have said, 'O Lord, send us mama, send us mama.' But you were not explicit. You did not say whether you wanted one mama or two. And now the Lord has sent you two. Hereafter you must be more careful when you pray, and say, 'O Lord, send us one mama, not two mamas or three, but just one mama.' Else if you continue to pray indefinitely, the Lord may send you a whole host of mamas, and you will be simply deluged."

Thus has been briefly recounted the history of the forward movement of the Shwegyin Karen Mission. It will be evident even to the most casual reader how **full of inspiration and encouragement** it has been, amply justifying the frequently reiterated declaration of Mr. Harris, that his work upon the Shwegyin field has been like **charioteer-**

ing. He has had no need of whip or lash, for his steeds were already of themselves eager for the goal, but with eye intent and every muscle at its utmost strain, he has had all he could do simply to direct their flying feet along the course.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

It remains now to mention briefly the needs of the work for the future. As to the home field, how long two schools of the same grade can be maintained in such close proximity as Shwegyin and Nyaunglebin is uncertain. The burden on the churches for their support is heavy. It seems pretty clear that **the work at Nyaunglebin should be pushed,** that **a house should be built for Miss Larsh** to live in, and the school with its large attendance raised, if possible, to **a higher grade.** It is hoped that some way may be found for doing this without prejudice to the work of the school at Shwegyin. The **school at Kyaukkyi,** in spite of its splendid record, has as yet no building well suited to its needs. For several years some of the native brethren have had the erection of such a building in mind, and it is hoped that it may soon be accomplished. It is believed that then the attendance of pupils would show a marked increase. On account of the death of Miss Watson at **Papun** in October, 1906, Miss Hawkes has been obliged to leave the field for a time, but it is hoped that after she takes her next furlough, which will be perhaps in 1909, she may find some companion to go with her to Papun, and **forward the work there along all lines.** These four schools, the one at Shwegyin and those at the three outstations, are proving more and more to be **real evangelistic agencies.** Pupils coming from heathen villages are converted, and return to their homes to bear with them the message of salvation. These must be followed up, and their efforts reinforced. In **the southern part of the field beyond Sittang** there is an important region which has thus far been left almost wholly unevangelized. **Mr. N. W. Harris** of Chicago, a nephew of Rev. Norman Harris, who has caught much inspiration from his uncle's life of unselfish devotion, is supplying funds which it is intended to use for the development of this field. Mention has already been made of the work being undertaken by the Salween association in **the Mainlongyi District of Siam.** Below will be found extracts from a leaflet showing how as long ago as 1880 missionary operations were begun in Siam not far from Chiengmai. Three churches were founded there at that time or shortly after, and for a time missionaries used to make occasional tours into that field for the purpose of encouraging and strengthening the churches there, but

since 1900, when Mr. Harris and Mr. Seagrave undertook a tour in that region together, no missionary has visited the field. It is Mr. Harris' earnest desire that, inasmuch as the work in Siam was begun by a Shwegyin Karen, and almost the last work of his father, Rev. Norman Harris, was to make an appeal for the prosecution of the work in those parts, the work in Mainlongyi may prove to be a base of operations from which the work in the regions beyond may be more adequately prosecuted. The field of the Shwegyin Mission is already **one of the most important fields in Burma**, but if this further work should be undertaken, it would mean **a vast extension** of the field with **possible developments in the future which can now be scarcely surmised.** Great wisdom and much physical endurance and strong determination will be required to make the work effective, but the missionary feels that **nothing short of the best and largest results should be attempted.** Great as has been the work already accomplished, it is as nothing compared with what remains to be done. May God grant grace and strength and opportunity for the doing of it!

EXTRACTS FROM A LEAFLET ENTITLED "AN OPEN DOOR TO THE KARENS OF NORTHERN SIAM," SIGNED "J. N. CUSHING," DATED "RANGOON, NOVEMBER, 1881."

"During the rains of 1880, a Christian Karen trader of Shwegyin, Toola by name, had occasion to go to the country a little north of Chiengmai for trading purposes. At the village of Mau-pah-eh he found himself unexpectedly detained by the eagerness of the people to hear the gospel, and, after finishing his business, instead of immediately returning, he devoted himself for a while to teaching the villagers to read. On his return to Shwegyin, and on the strength of his representations, Rev. Mr. Harris made an appeal through the 'Karen Morning Star' to the Christian Karens of Burma, to go over and evangelize their brethren. In response to the call of the Burma Baptist Missionary Convention for volunteers for this work, last November three young men from Bassein applied to be sent as missionaries to these Karens of Northern Siam. All of them had received some years of training in the Bassein Institute; and two of them had subsequently taken a course in the Seminary at Rangoon. The Convention duly commissioned them, and gave rupees 500 for their expenses. To this Sir Charles Bernard, the present able Chief Commissioner of British Burma, added a personal donation of rupees 100. Christian friends

in Bassein and other places also assisted them on their way. The ' Karen Morning Star ' gives a most interesting account of their journey and its results.

" The journey, going and coming, occupied just four months, from December 12, 1880, to April 12, 1881.

" Setting out from Tahkrai, the most northeastern of the Maulmein Karen Churches, they proceeded over the hills and mountains, leisurely, visiting and preaching in over twenty Karen villages before they reached Chiengmai, the chief town of one of the Northern Lao States, dependent on Bangkok. The people in three of these villages heard the gospel with great joy, and wished the preachers to remain, and teach them the way of salvation more perfectly. They could not remain, but encouraged them to hope that preachers would afterward be sent to them.

" In Chiengmai they were most kindly received by the Rev. Messrs. McGilvary and Wilson, of the American Presbyterian Mission, and entertained for one week. Through their agency, an order was obtained from the Court permitting them to travel and preach under the protection of the Chiengmai officials, and also giving the people leave to worship as they pleased, without molestation.

" Dr. McGilvary also went with them to Bahtah, a Karen village of fifty houses east of Chiengmai, which he is accustomed to visit for the purpose of preaching. The Karens there have listened favorably in the past; but none have as yet professed Christianity. They excused themselves on the ground that they were waiting to hear the gospel in their own tongue, and to receive their own books. One old Karen, who died two years ago, had begun to worship God, and to observe the Sabbath strictly.

" To Dr. McGilvary's surprise, the villagers did not visit himself or the Karen preachers as freely as formerly. It appeared afterward that a second secret order had been sent to them from the Court, that if they received the gospel they would be 'lost men.'

" From this village the Karen preachers went in a southeasterly direction across the hills, three or four days' march to Muang Lakon, the chief town of another principality, also dependent on Bangkok. Here they were received most cordially by a Shan disciple, a convert of the Presbyterian Mission. The Prince of Lakon gave them a traveling pass, similar to the one from Chiengmai. Two days north of this town they came to three Karen villages—Bahnot, Bahkah, and Bahthet; the latter a large village of forty-two houses,

"While they were preaching, an elder of the village arose and said: 'I am the youngest of five brothers. My father lived with me, and worshipped the living God four times every day. What the substance of his worship was, I know not exactly. When he was near to death he gave his children and grandchildren these instructions: "The Book of the Lord God will some time be brought back to you. When it comes back, receive it again, I beseech you. After the Bible comes back to you, the Lord God Himself will come, and then He will reign over all the earth." Again, last night, I dreamed that three teachers had come, bringing God's word. I awoke in the morning, and continued watching all day long, but saw no one; but now, at sundown, you appear, and you say that you have brought God's word. This agrees with my father's command, and with my dream last night. Therefore, this is verily the word of the Great God.'

"'We therefore preached,' they wrote in their report, 'and the village elder preached, in such a manner that five hundred people in these three villages received the message and believed the gospel at once with joy, threw away their ancestral customs, drinking spirits, heathenish ornaments, and everything that is inconsistent with a Christian profession. They washed their bodies and combed their hair every time before coming for worship; they learned from us to sing hymns in praise of the Triune God; assembled for worship morning and evening; kept the first day sacred, and all day thirsted for the worship of God, so that they could not be satisfied. Their minds were very bright. In a fortnight they learned to read the catechism a little, and could repeat two of our hymns, the 2nd and the 232nd. And the elders, men and women, and the chiefs, according to their understanding, preached and exhorted all to be firm.

"'We told them that in the worship of God we find trials and hardships; that it would happen to them as to us in Burma in the outset. They replied: "We do not fear; we dare to give our necks (to be cut off) for the worship of God. We have been dead in the service of Satan these many generations. We must stand after death before the Judgment Seat. That condemnation we cannot endure. If this body perishes, let it perish. If our souls are blessed at God's right hand in heaven, we are happy." They believed in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and that besides His sufferings on our account no one has undertaken to save us. They say that they have been often deceived by false prophets and have rejected them; but that what they now hear is the true word of God, they have no doubt of it.

"'When we had been there a fortnight, we said that we must return to our country. They all began to weep and wail, and said: "O teachers! If you leave us, how can we worship God?" We replied that we would go back quickly, and, if possible, return with our families before the rains; at longest we would be absent only six months. To this they agreed, saying: "If you come back with your wives and children, that will be more permanent." Then they rejoiced; and a representative from each village, six in all, escorted us back to Chiengmai.

"'When we arrived in Bahtah, on our return, the villagers came and listened with greater boldness than before. They wanted to believe very much, but still feared the threat of the Shan princes. They said: "This news is good and true; it agrees with the traditions of our ancestors; but you have come so suddenly, and now return so suddenly, that we cannot yet trust you. If persecution should arise, you would abandon us, perhaps. Come again with your wives and children, and we will believe." Then the new believers who escorted us from Lakon, exhorted them, saying: "We have already believed, and begun to worship God. There is no occasion to fear those who kill the body. Our souls are happy at the feet of God in heaven.'"

"They gather from their own observation, and from the testimony of others, that the Karens in this direction, towards Chiengmai and beyond towards China, are very numerous; probably more numerous than all the Karens in British Burma. * * * Their language is nearly identical with that spoken by the Karens of Rangoon and Bassein. It may be corrupted a little by contact with the Shan, as the Western Karen is corrupted by Burman words; but in the main it is a purer Karen than that spoken farther to the west. 'They are not an adulterous or incestuous people; they love each other, have good hearts, are a strong and well formed race. They get their living by agriculture. They do not move about much from place to place. They own many buffaloes and elephants.' Although they are among Buddhists they have not accepted Buddhism, but continue to practice demon worship, and look for the restoration of the lost divine book. Some have long professed to worship the eternal God."

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